

VZCZCXR07220  
RR RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHAS #1122 2901310  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 161310Z OCT 08  
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6499  
INFO RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 2535  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 7388  
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 1088  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 2893  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 9061  
RUEHNK/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT 6528  
RUEHNM/AMEMBASSY NIAMEY 1737  
RUEHBP/AMEMBASSY BAMAKO 0720  
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA 3548  
RHMFSS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

UNCLAS ALGIERS 001122

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/RSA - JBANDO  
NEA/RA - SSOUCEK  
PM/PPA - EFOSTER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: MARR PREL AG

SUBJECT: ALGERIAN MEDIA: AFRICOM TO COUNTER GROWING CHINESE ECONOMIC INFLUENCE

REF: STATE 104550

¶11. We delivered reftel demarche notifying the Algerian government of AFRICOM's official inception as a unified command to MFA North America Deputy Director Rachid Ouali on October 8. Ouali provided no substantive comment on AFRICOM.

Meanwhile, Algeria's leading newspapers devoted measured coverage of AFRICOM's stand up between September 30 and October 4, and highlighted the concern of skeptics in the region who doubt the true intention of AFRICOM's mission.

¶12. French-language daily El Watan provided factual coverage of AFRICOM's unified command status on September 30, quoting a July GAO report which underscored AFRICOM's mission to assist African nations interested in improving security for their people, territory and borders. The article also highlighted the concerns of AFRICOM skeptics who fear Washington is seeking to augment its military presence in Africa to offset China's growing economic influence in the region. French-language daily Liberte ran a headline calling AFRICOM "America's tool to control Africa" in a September 30 article. The article reported that the U.S. is moving ahead with AFRICOM despite continued hostility to the idea in the region. Liberte also cited Chinese economic might in Africa as one factor behind U.S. plans to press ahead with AFRICOM. Both Liberte and El Watan's September 30 reports noted that AFRICOM will continue to operate from Stuttgart. However, Liberte alleged in an October 4 article that a U.S. delegation in Rabat was discussing Morocco as a possible host for AFRICOM headquarters.

PEARCE